

Demonstration of Need – Compliance with Policy 2.102-A11: Urban Sprawl Criteria

The Applicant respectfully submits the following analysis to demonstrate consistency with Polk County Comprehensive Plan Policy 2.102-A11 and to confirm that the proposed Small-Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment does not promote urban sprawl.

a. Does not promote low-intensity, low-density, or single-use development in excess of demonstrated need.

The proposed amendment will convert ±72.27 acres of land currently designated for Single-Family, Multi-Family, and Commercial uses to an Institutional designation to accommodate a new public high school facility. This conversion directly responds to urgent capacity constraints within the Polk County Public School system, particularly at Haines City Senior High School, where 33 portable classrooms are currently deployed. The Polk County School Board has identified the need for a new high school to serve the rapidly growing population of Northeast Polk County. The site has been selected based on its strategic location and ability to meet current and future enrollment demands, representing a demonstrated and well-documented public infrastructure need rather than excess or speculative development.

b. Does not promote urban development in rural areas or leapfrog undeveloped lands.

The subject property is located within the Urban Development Area and is surrounded by existing and entitled urban development within the Poinciana Master Plan. The site is internal to Village 8 and is not situated within a rural context. Its development as a high school is a logical continuation of the existing urban framework and does not constitute leapfrog or premature expansion of the urban boundary.

c. Does not promote radial, strip, or ribbon development patterns.

The proposed Institutional use is centrally located within the master-planned community and does not front an arterial corridor in a way that would create strip or ribbon development. The high school will be integrated into the surrounding neighborhood with appropriate setbacks, buffering, and circulation planning. Its location supports a compact, connected land use pattern rather than a radial expansion.

d. Does not compromise the protection of natural resources.

The site has been evaluated for compatibility with environmental protection goals, and no significant wetlands, floodplains, or critical habitats are being impacted by the proposed land use change. Any future development of the site will be subject to County environmental review through the Site Development process, ensuring compliance with applicable natural resource protections.

e. Does not compromise adjacent agricultural areas or prime farmland.

The area is fully encompassed within the Poinciana urban boundary and is not adjacent to active agricultural operations or designated prime farmland. There will be no conflicts with agricultural activities or loss of viable agricultural lands resulting from the proposed change.

f. Maximizes the use of existing public facilities and services.

The high school site benefits from existing infrastructure that has already been planned or constructed as part of the Poinciana development. Roadways, utility lines, and drainage systems are either in place or included in ongoing capital improvement planning. Co-locating a school in this area ensures that prior infrastructure investments are maximized for community-serving uses.

g. Minimizes reliance on future public facilities and services.

The site's location within a developed and serviced area reduces the need for extensive new infrastructure. Polk County Public Schools will coordinate with local service providers to ensure that all utility and access needs are addressed through extensions or upgrades already contemplated in the County's growth strategy. The site will not require speculative or extraordinary service extensions.

h. *Does not increase the cost of providing public facilities and services disproportionately.*

The project will not impose disproportionate service costs on the County. The centralized nature of the site and its placement within an existing development footprint will allow for efficient school operation and service delivery. The project avoids siting inefficiencies that can occur when schools are developed in disconnected or underserved areas.

i. *Provides a clear separation between urban and rural uses.*

The subject site is located well within the established urban footprint of Poinciana and does not abut any designated rural areas. The proposed use supports urban service delivery and complements surrounding residential land uses.

j. *Does not discourage infill or redevelopment.*

This amendment promotes infill development by utilizing an internal, previously entitled site for a critical public infrastructure project. It enhances the overall functionality of the neighborhood and avoids the fragmentation of undeveloped parcels. The school will serve as a long-term civic anchor within the community.

k. *Encourages a functional mix of land uses.*

The conversion of this site from residential and commercial designations to an Institutional use introduces a complementary public facility that supports the surrounding residential population. The high school will bring long-term land use balance and reinforce community-serving functions within the master plan.

l. *Improves accessibility among linked land uses.*

The site is easily accessible from internal roadways within Poinciana and is centrally located to serve nearby residential neighborhoods. Future site planning will ensure multimodal access, including sidewalks, drop-off zones, and connections to existing transportation infrastructure, supporting student safety and connectivity.

m. *Does not result in the loss of functional open space.*

No designated open space or preserved greenways are affected by this amendment. The property was previously planned for residential and commercial use, and the shift to Institutional will maintain consistency with the overall master plan's land use balance and recreational network.